

## Written in Stone: Stories of the Past



*Kiʻi pōhaku, petroglyphs* are images carved into the rock and are found throughout Hawaiʻi. They are also found in many places around the world and tell us stories about the cultures and people who created them. Petroglyphs often depict symbols in nature or tell stories of the people, daily life, spiritual beliefs or travel. The largest field of petroglyphs in the Pacific region is located at Puʻuloa, "long hill" or "hill-(of)-long-(life)" and is considered a sacred place to the people of Hawaiʻi. It is sacred because parents carved round holes into the rock where they placed the umbilical cords of their newborn babies to insure them a long life. These *kiʻi pōhaku* recorded births, depicted travel and events, and shared information about boundaries and trails.

According to a Hawaiian  $k\bar{u}puna$  (elder), "Ki'i pōhaku are our writing and tell our  $mo'\bar{o}lelo$ " (story). The petroglyphs were pecked into stone because the ancestors meant them to be seen and to last, to preserve information for future generations. They recorded in stone what our people valued".

Here are some examples of some ancient ki'i pōhaku seen at Pu'uloa. Can you guess what some of them represent?



Activity #1: Use the space below to sketch other petroglyphs you find at Pu'uloa.

What do you think these represent?	
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Activity #2: Use ki'i pōhaku to create a picture story of your own, then write a sentence to explain your story.



**Pa'ahana the pueo says** . . . looking at petroglyphs is exciting and fun, but they are fragile. **Do not make rubbings of them or walk on them because it will destroy them.** 

**Want to Discover More**? . . . Visit our bookstore at the Kīlauea Visitor Center or Jaggar Museum to find more information about the petroglyphs of Hawai'i.